

IN THE ABSTRACT

Systems and methods ~~Techniques~~ are provided for automatically replenishing inventory by exploiting the use of electronic marketplaces. ~~In one aspect of the invention~~ For example, a system for automatically controlling an inventory of items comprises one or more sensors operative to automatically obtain information relating to a status associated with an inventory item. ~~Preferably, the sensors are embedded in the equipment containing the inventory that they are monitoring.~~ The system also comprises one or more computer systems (referred to herein as “brokers”) which are operatively coupled to the one or more sensors and which receive the status information from the one or more sensors. Each broker is further operative to automatically access one or more electronic marketplaces in order to determine one or more optimal parameters, based on the collected status information, to be used for replenishing an inventory item in accordance with one or more providers of the item via the one or more electronic marketplaces. ~~The system further may comprise one or more other computer systems (referred to herein as “gateways”) which are operatively coupled between the one or more sensors and the one or more broker computer systems.~~